

CLAIMS

1. (Previously Presented) A process for separating essential oils from an essential oil containing material comprising the steps of:
 - b. subjecting the essential oil-containing material to steam distillation using a steam distillation vessel or extraction using a steam distillation vessel or extraction using an extraction vessel to produce a mixture containing the essential oil and at least one hydrophilic phase;
 - c. contacting the mixture with a hydrophobic adsorbent in a column;
 - d. recycling the hydrophilic phase leaving the column to the steam distillation vessel or extraction vessel; and
 - e. treating the adsorbent in the column with a solvent that is more hydrophobic than the hydrophilic phase to elute the essential oil from the adsorbent.
2. (Original) A process according to Claim 1, wherein the mixture is obtained by steam distillation of the essential oil-containing material.
3. (Original) A process according to Claim 2, wherein the hydrophilic phase which is recycled in step (iii) has a temperature of 55-70°C.
4. (Original) A process to Claim 2, wherein the hydrophobic adsorbent is selected from synthetic polymers, modified silica and activated carbon.

5. (Original) A process according to Claim 4, wherein the adsorbent is selected from polystyrene, divinyl benzene-crosslinked polystyrene, and C4-, C8- and C18-coated silica.
6. (Original) A process according to Claim 1, wherein the essential oil-containing material is selected from Amber seed (=Ambrette or Musk seed), Rose, Cardamom, Cistus (=Rockrose), Costus root, Cumin, Elemi, Incence, Galbanum, Juniper, Gurjun, Lovage, Nutmeg, Orris, Myrrh, Cicely, Sweet Cicely, Styrax, Valerian, Melissa, Parsley, Bucchu, Cypress, Geranium, Lavandin, Lavender, Patchoulli, Santal (=Sandalwood), Sage, Vetyver and Ylang Ylang.
7. (Original) A process according to Claim 1, wherein the essential oil is selected from Amber oil, Ambrette, Rose oil, Cardamom oil, Cistus oil, Costus oil, Cumin oil, Elemi oil, Incence oil, Galbanum oil, Juniper oil, Gurjun oil, Lovage oil, Nutmeg oil, Orris oil, Myrrh oil, Cicely oil, Sweet Cicely oil, Styrax oil, Valerian oil, Melissa oil, Parsley oil, Bucchu oil, Cypress oil, Geranium oil, Lavandin oil, Lavender oil, Patchouli oil, Santal oil, Sage oil, Vetyver oil and Ylang Ylang oil.
8. (Previously Presented) A process according to Claim 1, wherein the treatment of step (iv) is effected as a chromatographic separation of the essential oil.
9. (Original) A process according to Claim 8, wherein the essential oil is Orris oil which is separated by the column into myristic acid and irone.
10. (Original) A process according to Claim 1, which is carried out continuously.

11. (New) A process for separating essential oils from a plant containing an essential oil comprising the steps of:
- a. subjecting the essential oil-containing plant material to steam distillation using a steam distillation vessel to produce a mixture containing the essential oil and at least one hydrophilic phase;
 - b. contacting the mixture with a hydrophobic adsorbent in a column;
 - c. recycling the hydrophilic phase leaving the column to the steam distillation vessel or extraction vessel; and
 - d. treating the adsorbent in the column with a solvent that is more hydrophobic than the hydrophilic phase to elute the essential oil from the adsorbent.